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## EDITORIAL NOTES

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When a movement is passing through an experimental stage, it requires courage and a certain degree of hardihood to respond to the educational public when they request the publication of some statement as to what is being attempted and what accomplished.

During the past decade the kindergarten movement in education has experienced some painful throes in the process of reconstruction. It has, however, stood the test of this crucial transition, thus disappointing the critics who saw in its externals and technique nothing more than a passing educational fad. But it is arising from its own ashes by outgrowing the superficial practice and traditions of its early history, thus fulfilling its promise of a valuable contribution to education. This development was prophesied by students whose faith was unshaken by the early mistakes, because they saw more implied in Froebel's philosophy than shown in his own applications or those which his more recent exponents had realized. In this promising process of reconstruction the effort is being made to build up a practice and application more worthy of Froebellian philosophy and theory.

It is generally conceded by the more thoughtful leaders in modern educational theory that the philosophy of Froebel, while incomplete and unsystematized as a whole, is marvelous in its intuitive insight and worthy of most serious study. Until recently, those men who had given the most scholarly study to the theory of education promulgated by Herbart, were utterly ignorant of the equally valuable contribution made by Froebel. The great Froebel is now coming to his own. Students of elementary education are no longer blinded by the sometimes puerile expression of his deep philosophy of life and education as typified in the kindergarten; they are beginning to see the Froebel who is larger and greater than any of the specific technicalities in which he often most inadequately attempted to realize his own philoso-

phy. One might venture the statement that as the debt of the elementary school to Herbart is universally understood and conceded, and his theory quite thoroughly worked out, many of the masters in our universities are now turning their attention to Froebel, bringing to bear upon his philosophy the scholarly research and analysis bestowed upon Herbart a generation ago.

Thus the Froebel who was in the sole possession of the kindergarten and of a limited number of school men, such as Dr. William T. Harris, Dr. William N. Hailman, and Col. Francis Parker, is now coming into the possession of the elementary school as well. It is not generally appreciated that Froebel had applied his voluntaristic philosophy to the process of education in the elementary school with recognized success before he concentrated his study upon the stage of development for which he planned the activities and instrumentalities of the kindergarten.

It is deeply significant and prophetic of the only true solution of the union between the kindergarten and the elementary school that some of our leading universities are offering courses in the theories of Herbart and Froebel. The masculine gender is generously represented not only in the staff of instructors, but in the enrolment of the classes. Here are to be found men who are preparing for the positions of principal and superintendent of schools and for instructors in our normal schools affiliated with state institutions or universities.

Thus Froebel is no longer in the exclusive possession of the kindergarten and the feminine gender. It behooves the kindergartners of the future to bring to the study of Froebel a scholarly preparation or we will find our birthright taken from us. We will be left with a conception of our own great leader which will be narrow and meager as compared with that of the masculine students of Froebel in these universities.

As was to be expected, this more critical study of Froebel is bringing to light his limitations as well as his genius, his oft-times faulty applications as well as his great principles. This broader interpretation of Froebellian philosophy and its application to the problems of the elementary school, is not only demand-

ing a reconstruction of the traditional methods of the elementary school, but an equally radical reconstruction of the traditions and practice of the kindergarten. This must be done if the latter is to survive and hold a dignified position in the educational systems of the future.

This need for regeneration within the kindergarten itself, has caused some anxiety among kindergartners. There is a more or less vaguely defined tendency to divide into factions in favor of or opposed to reconstruction. Some feel the urgent necessity for increasingly modifying the practice as laid down by Froebel himself; others are equally certain that such an attempt will be most disastrous to the movement and that the kindergarten must be maintained in its entirety of theory and practice if its true value is to be passed on to future generations. On the whole a fair majority of kindergartners are coming to realize that a respectful, scholarly criticism is not only inevitable but desirable.

Those who believe that the kindergarten must be rescued from its own formalism and traditionalism have faced the serious necessity for experiment and research in attempting to apply Froebel's principles in a more consistent practice. This experimental work has been so absorbing, the attempt to evolve a more worthy practice so demanding, that the participants have had little time to devote to the publication of articles which would explain the work being done in this forward movement in kindergarten circles. In other words the kindergartners actively engaged in the attempt to find worthy substitutes for a sane reconstruction of the traditional procedure, have been too absorbed in the experimental demands to record the results of research, too conscious of the tentative value of the results of experiment to draw conclusions, too eager to move forward toward a more ideal vision to accept as final any results so far attained.

However, as the kindergarten is being incorporated in the public school system, superintendents, principals, and school men generally are urging kindergartners to make known from their point of view its present status and future needs. There is an

increasing demand for a fuller understanding of the progress being made by the so-called "new movement" and the time has come when kindergartners must meet this responsibility if superintendents and principals are to participate in and give intelligent supervision to the kindergartens under their charge.

A group of kindergartners who early affiliated with the reconstructive movement in the kindergarten have responded to this call and there will be, through the coming year, one article on the theory and practice of the kindergarten in each number of the *Elementary School Teacher*. The contributors are Mrs. Alice H. Putnam, Froebel Training School, Chicago; Miss Bertha Payne, The University of Chicago; Miss Alice Temple, Mrs. Mary Boomer Page, Chicago Kindergarten Institute; Miss Nina Vandewalker, Milwaukee State Normal School; Dr. Jenny B. Merrill, Supervisor New York Public School Kindergartens; Miss Caroline T. Haven, Ethical Culture School, New York; Miss Patty S. Hill, Columbia University, New York.

These contributors were selected, not on the basis of intellectual uniformity in either theory or practice, but rather on the basis of a unity of purpose, a purpose which grew out of an earnest desire to see the kindergarten go forward in the realization of its prophetic greatness, even at the cost of death to its dearest traditions; if by dying to the letter of the outer form, the divine spirit of the kindergarten could be born in the light of the new day.

These articles are an effort to state to educators in general, in as simple terminology as possible, what is going on in the kindergarten world, what progress has been made, and what reconstructions found necessary in the light of recent developments in philosophy, psychology, and sociology. The ground is new and the attempts to improve upon the earlier practice will necessarily often be faulty. The interpretations, the inferences and conclusions will quickly be improved upon and possibly superseded, as more scholarly study is brought to bear upon the problems under consideration. This is but the price of progress and the time has now come when attempts which are being made

to better our best in the kindergarten should be made known to all educators, including our professional co-workers who hold opposing points of view.

These articles are published with the sincere desire that they may provoke discussion and study, and that through the fire of criticism the gold may be separated from the dross and only the most worthy elements survive. If this great movement is to grow and the kindergarten be liberated from the faulty traditions which are necessarily mixed with its illuminating truths, we who desire to participate and contribute to this reconstruction, even in the humblest way, must not be too fearful of being found in the wrong. As explorers in a new land, too vast for any one person to investigate thoroughly alone, let each return from the search, eager to contribute to the whole the small knowledge gained and in turn to have his personal impressions rectified and illuminated by the contributions of the whole. Such a spirit will in time prove the true value of the principles of the kindergarten to all education and make it possible for both the kindergarten and the elementary school to absorb the eternally true in Froebellian philosophy while eliminating the limitations growing out of his education, training, personality, temperament, and period.

If these articles be found worthy of collecting into a volume for publication at the end of the year for the use of kindergartners, elementary teachers, principals and superintendents, all is well. If the discussion and criticism which they call forth bring the kindergarten to a higher level of attainment, and, having done this, they perish, all is well. If, as a result of the discussion and criticism provoked, the new movement in kindergarten outgrows these articles on the upward way to the realization of higher ideals, the contributors will feel satisfied to see their personal contributions fade in the light of any newer and better thought which they may call forth.

Those who help us to detect our errors will contribute, not only to the kindergarten movement, but will place the contributors themselves under everlasting obligations.

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